खुलवा सकता है । इसलिए मैं आज आपके दरबार में हाजिर हुआ हूं कि एक पार्लियामेंट का मैम्बर क्या करे ? जब इस तरीके से उसके साथ ज्यादती हो सकती है तो आम पब्लिक के साथ क्या होता होगा । यह बात मैं आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहता हूं । शुक्रिया

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now, we will have reply by the Minister of Labour and after that, we will have the special mentions.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR—contd.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): Madam, Deputy Chairperson, I am grateful to the House, particularly to the Hon. Members who participated in the debate on the working of the Labour Ministry. This has given an opportunity to highlight the problems of the working class in the country, both organised and unorganised, as well as the problems of unemployment which is the biggest problem facing the country today. The Hon. Members who have participated, have not only highlighted the various problems of the working class, they have made a number of constructive suggestions which, I am sure, will help in tackling the problems of the working class to a certain extent and will certainly lighten the burden of the Labour Ministry.

Before I go to the specific issues that have been raised on the floor of this House, I would like to record my deep appreciation for the co-operation of the working class, the co-operation extended to the Ministry by the central trade-union organisations, in keeping the industrial relations, by and large, peaceful, in the last one year on so—in the last three years for that matter.

I had been holding the charge of the Labour Ministry even earlier, in 1986 and 1987, and this is my second term. From the situation that obtained during 1986-87 when I first took over as Minister of Labour, and now, I can see a tremendous change in the attitude of the working class and in the attitude of the central trade-unions organisations. Our workers today have become very constructive. They realise that productivity is key to the success of our public enterprises as well as the private sector. Mr. Balanandan, Mr. Mathur and others have emphasised the point of productivity and I think today our working class do realise the importance of a new work culture, the importance of hard work and the importance of productivity and quality products. If we look at the scenario of industrial relations in the last 3 years, we find a very significant improvement. During 1987-88-89, if we look at the mandays lost due to strikes and lockouts, on an average, it was 33.58 million mandays. The subsequent year of 1991-92 has shown average mandays lost due to strikes and lockouts as 27.26 million, which means that there has been an improvement by about 20 per cent. Here, of course, I agree with the hon. Member, Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta who very rightly pointed out that if we look at the mandays lost due to strikes and mandays lost due to lockouts, we find that the figure of mandays lost due to lockouts was much higher than the mandays lost due to strikes. It only shows how constructive and how responsible our workers have become.

Madam, during 1993, strike notices were given in 444 cases. Out of these 444 cases, with the intervention of the Central industrial disputes mechanism that we have—the office of the Chief Labour Commissioner—we have been able to avert strike in as many as 415 cases. This is a tremendous achievement and I would like to take this occasion, this opportunity, to congratulate all those who have put in their efforts and skill in averting the strike in these cases, with the intervention of the Chief Labour Commissioner. (*Interruptions*)

Madam, if you look at the comparative figures of the mandays lost in the Central and in the State sphere, and if you look at the figures in respect of the public sector and the private sector, we find that the performance of the Central sector has been very good. I do not want to go into the details, to save the time of the House. I would only say that from a level of 4.29 million mandays lost in the Central sector, in 1989, it came down to 0.77 million mandays in 1992. I am just giving these figures to illustrate my

point of view as to how our workers have become very responsible. I would like to congratulate them on this occasion.

A lot of questions have been raised about the performance of the public sector. I would like to deal with the public sector, or, for that matter, the organised sector, first. Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta said that there was anarchy in the public sector. Other Members also said that the Government was not doing anything except retrenchment. They said that the budgetary support had been stopped and that the public sector was in a debt trap. I do agree that the performance of the public sector is not very good.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra) : It is not bad also.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : It is not bad also.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA (West Bengal) : What do you mean when you say that it is good and, at the same time, say that it is not bad also ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Well ; out of the 246 public sector enterprises in the country, the number of sick units is 98. Out of these 98 units, the chronically sick units are 58 in number. That is why I say, it is bad, but not very bad.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : These were taken over from the private sector.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : If we look at the position today, since independence, we have invested Rs. one lakh crore in the public sector. Out of this, 85 per cent of our investment has given us good return. Therefore, we cannot say that the public sector is not performing badly. It is only in the case of 15 per cent investment that we have not been able to get a reasonable return.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : It is because these were taken over from the private sector.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : You are absolutely right.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal) : There is also the point that the profit of the public sector has increased in the recent period.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Thanks to you ; thanks to all of you.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA : Did you tell the Finance Minister that the public sector is performing very well ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Well ; I am confining my remarks, at the moment, to the public sector units which are doing well and the public sector units which are not doing well. As has been rightly pointed out by Mr. Jagesh Desai, most of the units which are not doing well, which have incurred losses, are those units which were sick and taken over by the Government.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Which were made sick.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Which were made sick by the private sector.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I am not a doctor. Therefore, I cannot diagnose very much at this stage. I am just telling you about the position as it obtains today. When I took over as the Minister of Labour, for the second time, I met the delegation of all the Central trade unions ; not once, twice, but a number of times. There, they put forward their main demands before me. The most important demands that they have put before me were five or six. The most important problem that needed immediate solution was regarding the revision of the rates of DA formula which was hanging for many years, and no agreement could be reached on the new DA formula. That was No. 1, the most important problem that was brought before the Ministry of Labour. The second important problem that was brought before us was the ban that was imposed on the public sector undertakings for starting a new wage negotiation because, in most of the public sector enterprises the earlier agreement had expired and a new agreement was due and Government, for some reasons, was not giving them the go-ahead clearance. The No. 3 problem was the pension scheme for industrial workers. No. 4 was removal of the ceiling on payment of gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act. No. 5

was removal of the ceiling on the payment of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act and to increase the amount of compensation for the workers. No. 6 was the removal of ceiling or enhancement of ceiling—some for enhancement and some for removal—on the payment of bonus. These were the six major problems that were presented unanimously by all the central trade union organizations. I would like to deal with each one of them.

As far as DA was concerned, I convened two meetings. Mr. Balanandan was very much present on that day. But in the second meeting we could come to a certain understanding, and the formula was agreed unanimously, and from the level of Rs. 1.60 it was raised to Rs. 2. That was the agreement. This new formula came into force with retrospective effect. I do not exactly remember the date but it is from 1989 onwards. As a result of this agreement, as arrears for 1989, 1990 and 1991, a total amount of Rs. 443.29 crores were paid to the workers. The arrears of DA were to the tune of Rs. 443.29 crores. For current payment of 1992-93, the expenditure was Rs. 712.13 crores. Therefore, as a result of the single decision in the tripartite meeting for revision of the rate of dearness allowance, enhancing it from Rs. 1.65 to Rs. 2 an amount of Rs. 1,155.42 crores accrued to the working class. It is not a small amount. Rs. 1,155 crores ! Therefore, how can anybody in the country today say that this Government has done nothing for the working class or that we are completely neglecting them ? On the single decision of the revision of DA, the Government had to shell out Rs. 1155 crores. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal) : The trade unions did not accept it because they wanted the slab rate of DA. It was kept pending. You agreed to it. What decision have you taken ?

[**The Vice Chairman** (SHRIMATI ... SUSHMA SWARAJ) in the Chair]

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : For your information, Mr. Roy, West Bengal raised it from Rs. 1.65 p. to Rs. 1.75 p. The working class did not accept it. You imposed it on the working class.

SHRI JIBON ROY : You agreed under your chairmanship that that slab rate of D.A. would be introduced. You decided it.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : When ?

SHRI JIBON ROY : You have decided it. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Madam, I was not bringing in what happened in West Bengal. He provoked me to bring it in.

I have given Rs. 2, whereas they had given only Rs. 1.75 p. ... *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Please, Mr. Jibon Roy.

SHRI JIBON ROY : I am talking about the decision aken about introduction of D.A. slab under your chairmanship. ... *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Let him continue.

Mr. Minister, please continue. ... *(Interruptions)*

Please sit down. Mr. Roy, please sit down. Let him continue.

Yes, Mr. Minister, you continue.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Mr. Roy, you can start shouting. I will take rest. Don't worry.

I come to the second demand of the workers. ... *(Interruptions)*

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Please, Mr. Jibon Roy. Please sit down. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JIBON ROY : The decision on slab rate of DA was taken in the meeting presided over by him. ... *(Interruptions)* Is he going to implement that decision taken under his chairmanship or not ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Madam, there were two decisions on that day. One was to increase the rate from Rs. 1.65 p. to Rs. 2, which has been implemented.

Number two, the agreement was that from 1-1-92 the DA formula would be on the basis of a slab system. This was agreed to by the Government. Why this was delayed was we wanted all the Central trade union organisations to sit together and to give us a common formula on DA, a slab system. ... (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Please.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Please listen to me. I have listened to you very patiently.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Please, Mr. Roy. Now you let him continue. Mr. Minister, you continue.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I can also shout very loudly. I have also got equal power.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Please continue.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : You must listen to me. If you have to get any clarification, you can ask me later on.

The slab system has been accepted by the Government. After some time the Central trade union organisations held a meeting among themselves. They have given us a common formula for the slab system. It is now under the consideration of the Government. I am going to convene a tripartite meeting on D.A. for finalising the slab system very soon. I say "very soon." It should not be more than ten days. So, even that will be implemented. This is what I am trying to say.

The second most important demand of the workers was about wage negotiation, that the ban on wage negotiation should be removed and that new guidelines should be issued. I know that on this account many Central trade unions are not happy because the ban on negotiation was lifted, but the Government made a departure in issuing the guidelines for wage negotiations. Normally, the Government's instructions were that you could go on negotiating, but that your increase should not be beyond 10 per cent. These are the general guidelines issued. Our friends, the trade union leaders, very rightly from their own angle, used to tell the management, "Ten per cent has been given by the Government. What are you going to give us ?" Therefore, ultimately, the wage revision always used to exceed the normal limit of 10 per cent laid down in the guidelines. Therefore, in this particular year the Government simply gave guidelines to the management, "You have the freedom to negotiate and to reach any agreement to increase any amount, keeping in view your paying capacity. If you are able to pay more, pay more. If you are not able to pay more, don't pay more. It is for you." These guidelines were issued ... (*Interruptions*)

I know that many Central public sector enterprises are having a problem in coming to a final settlement on wage revision, but it is not a fact again that nothing is moving, that wage negotiation has stopped and that the workers have not got any relief. This again is not the correct position. ... (*Interruptions*)

I am not yielding. I have tried to collect some information. I am not able to furnish the entire information to the House. But at random, I have collected some information. As a result of the lifting of ban on wage negotiations and after commencement of the new wage negotiations by various unions with their managements, an agreement has been signed finally for an interim relief in cement industry, in banks, Indian Airlines, Air India, Cochin Port Trust, Oil India Ltd., Grindlays Bank, International Airports Authority of India, Barauni Refinery, ONGC, Ports and Docks, Railways, P&T, Defence, CPWD, Courts. A final settlement has been made. An interim relief has been agreed upon by the trade union leaders and the managements. As a result of this agreement, there will be an annual liability of Rs. 1,900 crores to the management. I am saying this only to impress upon the House, to impress upon the hon. Members that the Government is trying its best to see that some benefit accrues to our working class.

What was the third demand of the workers ? It was the pension scheme. We have finalised a pension scheme. A Bill was introduced on the floor of this House.

This House had decided that before the Bill was taken up for consideration, the Minister should have a meeting with all the political parties. Accordingly, we had convened the meeting with all the political parties. The political parties in that meeting decided that the Labour Minister must consult the Central Trade Union Organisations. Therefore, we have convened a meeting with the Central trade union organisations as per the directive of the political parties. Ultimately, we have come to an understanding. The matter needs a little bit of modification. I have had brief meetings with the Finance Minister and his Ministry. I am sure that this matter would also be resolved very soon in the light of the decision taken in the meeting with the Central trade union organisations. I think, then, the House would be in a position to discuss and take the Bill into consideration. I am not sure whether we can bring forward the Bill within this session. If it is not brought forward within this session, it would be brought forward in the next session.

The fourth demand of the workers was removal of the ceiling on the payment of gratuity. I have accepted the demand of the workers. I have gone to the Cabinet. The Cabinet has approved it. I will be coming to the Parliament for amendment of the Payment of Gratuity Act and removing the ceiling. I feel that every worker is entitled to payment of gratuity. Similarly, the Workmen's Compensation Act also. The demand was to remove the ceiling. We have agreed. The Cabinet has agreed. We have agreed to double the compensation. Not only that; we have brought in many more categories of workmen under the purview of the Workmen's Compensation Act, particularly, the working journalists, cameramen. They are also exposed to a lot of hazards, to a lot of problems when they go to cover a political party meeting or any other meeting or a communal riot. They are subjected to a lot of harassment. We thought that cameramen and working journalists must also be compensated while they are on duty, if they are injured or if they are killed. Therefore, journalists, photographers, cameramen have also been brought under the purview of the Workmen's Compensation Act. I hope to come to the Parliament very soon for amendment of the Act also because it has been cleared by the Cabinet.

SHRI PARVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY (Orissa) : I have a point for clarification.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : Are you yielding, Mr. Minister ?

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA (Uttar Pradesh) : He has already yielded.

SHRI PARVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY : The hon. Minister has said that the Workmen's Compensation Act will be amended. Will it now cover migrant labour who might become casualties or injured in the course of their work in other States so that they can file a case for compensation with the State Compensation Commissioners ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : The Act will now cover not only migrant workers working in other States but also Indian workers working abroad with Indian companies. If they are working with a foreign company, the law of that land will apply. But, for example, if an Indian project exporter is constructing a road or a power-house abroad and he takes in Indian workers, the migrant workers abroad working under the Indian employer will also now be covered under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Therefore, it is a very comprehensive amendment that we are bringing in and quite a number of our workmen will be benefited by it.

Therefore, Madam, out of the six major demands of the trade unions, five have already been agreed to. One remains.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN (Kerala) : That one is a big one.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Yes. It may be a big one. I do not deny that. What remains is the enhancement of the ceiling or the removal of the ceiling for the purpose of payment of bonus. From my side, I have exercised and brought out some proposals. I have discussed it with various trade union organisations. A Cabinet paper has been prepared. We have consulted all our sister organisations

and Ministries. And, the matter is now before the Cabinet. I may not be able to say what decision the Cabinet will take. But from our side, we are moving. And, I can assure you that I have, certainly, put all the efforts under my command to see that the Cabinet approves our proposals. So, only one major demand remains to be resolved. Otherwise, most of the demands of the working class have been resolved.

The other aspects of public sector are long things and I really do not know whether we should go into all these. There has been a lot of fear in the mind of the working class as to what will happen to the working class as a result of the New Economic Policy. The Government appointed a special tripartite committee to go into the effects of the New Economic Policy on labour. This committee was constituted under my chairmanship where the employers and the Central trade union organisations are represented. Madam, since 1991, I had as many as six meetings of the special tripartite committee. The special tripartite committee constituted sub-committees; a sub-committee for the engineering industry, another for the pharmaceutical and chemical industry, another sub-committee for the jute industry and one each for cotton textiles, electricity boards and road transport corporations.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : The sub-committee for electricity boards is not functioning.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Well, I must confess that I had been able to have only one meeting each of the sub-committees for electricity and road transport. But, in the other areas, whether it is jute, cotton textiles, engineering or chemicals, we had been able to meet on a number of occasions and we have been discussing the problems with trade union leaders. One of the hon. Members yesterday mentioned that the Government was not taking trade unions into confidence. It is not so. I must respectfully submit that it is not so. The number of meetings that I am taking and the Ministry of Labour is taking, if I have to elaborate them, it is going to be a very, very long list. Mr. Balanandan knows about it very well. He has been attending those meetings and has been giving very constructive suggestions in those meetings. Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta knows it very well. Mr Gurudas Das Gupta was associated with a Sub-Committee on the National Textiles Corporation and that Sub-Committee and our Committee met as many as fourteen times and after these meetings, we have been able to come to a unanimous agreement which is quite unique, I must say, which again demonstrates the desire of the working class not only to revive but to revitalise the public sector enterprises, to profess their faith in the public sector concept. I must congratulate, I must thank all the Hon. Members. There were four Members of Parliament in that Sub-Committee and all of them have contributed their best. In fact, you know, the fourteen meetings were just official meetings. But unofficially, I do not know how many meetings I had—individually and in groups. But I am happy that we have been able to reach a unanimous agreement that in the National Textiles Corporation, there would be no closure of any unit, there would be no privatisation of any unit and the revival package would be at the cost of ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh) : There will be no retrenchment also.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Yes, there would be no retrenchment and the revival would be done ... (*Interruptions*). Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, it is better not to go into what we agreed privately and what we agreed in public. That will be a very long chapter. I am very grateful to you because you have played a very important role in reaching this decision. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal) : There is no doubt that you are trying your best. Nobody is blaming you as a Minister. But there is a general complaint in the trade union circle that whatever is being decided in the Special Tripartite Committee, is not being implemented. I would suggest that minutes of all meetings of the Special Tripartite Commitee and some important decision taken in the Special Tripartite Committee be circulated amongst the Members of

the House and some time could be fixed so that the matter could be discussed as to how far it could be implemented.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I will be very happy to know about a place where there is no complaint. I don't find any individual who does not have any complaint against him. In your family, you have complaints from your children. It is a part of life. Complaints will be there and I am not worried about the complaints. But you must appreciate the efforts that we are making.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry) : Mr. Minister, our complaint is that there are no results forthcoming. There is no doubt that you are making efforts. Every Member in this House said that you are taking keen interest in various fields of labour. But the complaint by the hon. Members is that there is no co-operation from the States, there is no effective monitoring mechanism to ensure proper implementation. What are you going to do for this ? We are not here to hear your sermons.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sermons are given by both. MPs are very fond of giving sermons to the Ministers and the Ministers reciprocate by giving sermons to them. It is a Parliamentary practice. A similar agreement has been signed in the case of IDPL for its modernisation and revitalisation. Here again, I must be grateful to the workers and the trade unions where they have demonstrated to what extent they can sacrifice in order to revive the organisation to which they belong. An agreement has been signed with as many as 40 unions in the IDPL where they have said that for the next four years there shall be no wage revision, that for the next for years all the allowances—whether it is the conveyance allowance, whether it is the LTC, or whether it is the festival allowance—will be forgone. The workers will not take these allowances. The workers have said that they are ready to work overtime without any payment. This shows the extent to which our workers have gone to see that the public sector not only survives but also prospers. Therefore, with this attitude of the workers, I am sure and I am quite confident that the public sector can be revived. What is required is a common effort by all of us. I think, everyone of us should positively contribute. A mere criticism or condemnation of the management or the workers is not going to help us. I think everyone of us, if we are determined, can show results. Mr. Narayanasamy has said, "No results are coming". You know, results can be visible. And there are invisible results also. When I say, Rs. 1,155 crores have been paid as arrears and the current dues to the workers, one can say it is not a result. One can still say that. When I say, as a result of the new wage negotiations, Rs. 1,900 crores per annum are going to be paid to the workers, one can still say it is not a result, but I have no argument over that. The results can be seen and cannot be seen. There are invisible results, and results cannot be seen immediately. The results of the action that we take today may come after one year, it may come after two years, it may take even more time. It can even take one decade.

Another point was raised yesterday regarding the functioning of the BIFR. BIFR is an organisation which ultimately gives the seal of death, and if the Government wants to expedite the process of closure of the units, then the route is very far. I most respectfully submit that it is not so. The number of units registered with BIFR as on 31 March, 1994 is 1,488 ; the number of public sector units, both Central and State, is 111 ; cases finally disposed of are 1,060, out of which there are four Central public sector enterprises and 22 State public sector enterprises ; cases of revival scheme, sanctioned and approved, both public sector and private sector, are 448.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : How many are for the public sector ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : One each. Only two so far.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : It means, for the public sector BIFR is particularly worse. Out of 111, they have till now approved revival scheme for two.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : That is also not bad ... (*Interruptions*) ... And this too, had it not been for the efforts of the Tripartite Committee, had it not been for the efforts of the trade union leaders, would not have happened.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : I have only a word of compliment for the Tripartite Committee but the point is, BIFR is acting only in haste to close down the public sector units. That is palpable from the statistics.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : No, it is not correct, Madam. I refute this charge.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : Against two revivals, there are four cases of winding up!

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I think I have disposed of most of the points. Well, I think, it is almost time for lunch and everybody is feeling hungry. Now, I come to the unorganised sector which is very important. Madam, 90 per cent of our workforce is in the unorganised sector. A question was put, "What has happened to the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour ?" Madam, last year, this House had discussed specifically the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour. At that time I informed this august House of the action taken by the appropriate authorities like the Central Government, the State Governments and UTs. I don't want to repeat that. I promised on the floor of the House that very soon the action taken report on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour will be placed on the Table of the House by the Government, which the government has already done. I don't want to go into the details.

श्री चतुरानन मिश्र : मैं आपका एक मिनट लूंगा । मैंने आपको सुझाव दिया था कि रुरल लेबर के लिए वैलफेयर फंड, कोष बनाने की बात है, उसमें बहुत कम्प्लीकेटिड सुझाव आया था कि लैंड सैस बढ़ाया जाए, यह किया जाए, काफी कम्प्लीकेशन होगा । मैंने सुझाव दिया था कि एफ० सी० आई० जितना फूड खरीदती है या बेचती है, उस पर अगर आप एक रुपए में दो पैसे सेस लगा दें तो 200 करोड़ से ज्यादा का धन आपको आ जाएगा । उसमें कलैक्शन में भी खर्चा नहीं होगा क्योंकि दूसरा कोई भी तरीका निकालिएगा तो कलैक्शन में खर्चा होगा, तो यह आटोमैटिकली आपके पास आ जाता । जब आप किसानों के लिए 30 परसैंट, 35 परसैंट दाम बढ़ाते हैं तो मजदूर के लिए दो पैसे हमने सिर्फ अर्ज किया था, उस वक्त लगा था कि आप राजी भी हैं । तो कहां वह स्थिति है, जरा यह बताएं ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Madam, I forgot to give one piece of vital information on the public sector. I don't want that this particular point should go unanswered. Many hon. Members mentioned that the Government has stopped the budgetary support to the public sector. It is not true. In 1993-94, the budget estimate for the Central public enterprises was Rs. 6,540.18 crores and the revised budget estimate was Rs. 7,450.78 crores. Therefore, there was an increase of about Rs. 1,000 crores. As far as the budget estimate of 1994-95 is concerned, this year Rs. 7,200.92 crores have been earmarked. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Madam, there are a number of vital public sector undertakings and many of them belongs to West Bengal. I can name these undertakings. These are the National Jute Manufacturing Corporation, the National Textiles Corporation, etc. The allocation made to these undertakings is only nominal and is far less than what was allocated last year. Mr. Minister, there are many instances where the normal flow of money to the public sector undertakings has been discontinued while these cases are being reviewed by the BIFR.

SHRI JIBON ROY : Madam, in the budget allocations 70 per cent of the allocation is for the V. R. S. not for the Plan.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I know very well that the biggest problem is in West Bengal. I am aware of that.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : That is the point. West Bengal needs a fair deal.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : It will be very good if the hon. Member finds out why it is so. Hon. Member also knows that I had given them the maximum time to look into the problems faced by the

public enterprises located in West Bengal. Hon. Member is also aware that he is one person whom I have been trusting so much and I requested him to help me in sorting out many problems. I think our understanding is perfect. Yesterday, the hon. Member was talking about the legal action taken against the defaulters of Provident Fund. I must be grateful to him. He has done a lot of good work on that. He not only went to the Bengal to find out the facts, but he has also been meeting the Chief Ministers, the Revenue Ministers and the Labour Ministers of all the major States in our country. He has been the Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the Labour Ministry. The Sub-Committee has done excellent work. I only want to put on record my sincere thanks. Yesterday, the hon. Member said that the Labour Ministry should support the efforts made by the Government of West Bengal. There is no question of not supporting it. It is a question of taking action jointly, not only with the West Bengal Government, but with all the State Governments. I am very happy that this trend of partnership in trying to solve the common problems of the country is quite visible. I do not want to go into any controversy. Let the credit be taken by all the State Governments. We are ready to cooperate. But what is important is the State Government. Only when things are done jointly and unitedly, results can be achieved. We have seen this happen in the case of Provident Fund recovery in West Bengal. I was talking about the unorganised labour. I will be very brief. Almost ninety per cent of our workforce is in the unorganised sector. Out of this, agricultural labourers constitute the largest number. The National Commission on Rural Labour has estimated the number of agricultural labourers to be 110 million. It is this category of workers who have been toiling and it is because of them that today India is proud of having achieved self-sufficiency in food production. I think we neglected them for long. I have been pleading with the trade union organisations. I have been asking them to go out and try to organise the unorganised sector ... (*Interruptions*) ... Let us not confine ourselves to the 10 per cent of the workforce which is comparatively in a better position today. I am happy that the trade union organisations have taken up this job. We have had a lot of discussions on the floor of this House. Again I must refer to my earlier tenure as the Labour Minister. We had discussed this matter in the Consultative Committee and we had appointed a Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta. He travelled around the country and came out with a report recommending that there should be a central legislation for agricultural labourers. I accepted that proposition both inside and outside the House. Whenever, I had an occasion to speak on this issue, I have said, "Yes, I personally, feel and very strongly, that there must be a central legislation for agricultural workers". But our country being federal in structure, in spite of our desire to go fast, sometimes this is not possible. We have to take the State Governments into confidence. I had convened a meeting of the Labour Ministers specifically to discuss this. The draft Bill was circulated to all the State Governments. I gave them a time limit and asked them to reply within that time limit. I said, "If you don't respond, I will take it that you have no comments to make and I will go ahead". Unfortunately, the replies did not come in time and when I was going ahead with it, the views of the State Governments started pouring in. I think all the State Governments must have given their views by this time. The State Governments have expressed their reservations saying that since the proposed legislation would emphasise the welfare aspect of the agricultural workers in the form of education, health care and housing, it would be difficult for them to implement it if they would be required to bear the additional financial burden. And they have made it very clear that the Central Government can go ahead with the Bill provided there are no financial implications on their part. Therefore, a way had to be found and we decided that there should be no financial burden on the State Governments and that this Bill would provide for the constitution of a welfare fund, of its own, collected by way of, may be, a cess on the land holdings. It is not final; we are still explor-

ing it. But we are, more or less, at the final stage. We were at the final stage earlier also, but now that the State Governments' opinions have come, I have to take them into consideration. But it will be finalised very soon and I can assure you once again that ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Can we expect that a Bill, to this effect, will be introduced in the next Session of Parliament ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I hope so.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : I would like to put one small question. I agree that the welfare of the agricultural workers has to be taken care of. But, at the same time, provision of minimum wages for the agricultural workers also assumes importance. Whatever be the legislations that we have, somehow the workers are not getting the benefit. So, a Central legislation has become necessary in this regard because the State Governments are not able to do anything. Therefore, will the Minister give an assurance that the wage aspect *vis-a-vis* the welfare measures will be taken care of ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I think the hon. Member is very right. We have Central legislation that emphasises wages and that is the Minimum Wages Act. But the implementation of it is the duty of the State Governments concerned.

Now, in the Labour Ministers' Conference, we accepted the recommendation of the National Commission on Labour that the minimum wage should not be below Rs. 20 ; that is, the minimum wage should be Rs. 20. This was accepted in the meeting. But the fact remains that there are some States which have still not implemented that decision. They say, "No, no, we are not a party to that decision". I do understand the problems faced by the State Governments. They have their own problems and it is a fact. Yesterday, one of the hon. Members asked, "Why we should not have a National Wage Policy ?" This matter has been discussed in this country for, I do not know, how many decades ; it may be at least over two decades, if not more. The first National Commission on Labour, as far back as 1969, recommended a National Wage Policy. It decided that there should be a uniform national minimum wage. This was discussed in the 31st Session of the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1980, 32nd meeting of the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1981, 28th meeting of the Indian Labour Conference in 1981 and 38th meeting of the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1987. After discussions in all these forums, we came to the conclusion that we should try to have a uniform regional minimum wage instead of going in for a national minimum wage. We constituted a Regional Advisory Board and I myself had meetings with the Ministers of all the regions. Now, what happens is that wherever the minimum wage is less, people make more investment in those areas and more and more industries are set up whereas, in areas where the minimum wage is high, there is a lot of migration of labour force from the neighbouring States. This is happening in the cashew industry, between the Governments of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the Government of Kerala. It is not a very simple thing. We have gone very deep into the matter. We are now trying to have a second round of meeting with the State Labour Ministers at the regional level. I think we have fixed a date for this meeting. I don't remember the dates. We have fixed meetings for all the regions. I hope to discuss this matter again. There will be a Bill to regulate not only the conditions of service of the agricultural labour but also to provide a welfare fund for them.

Then comes the question of construction workers. I have made a promise in this House that there will be a Bill for construction workers also. Shrimati Jayanthi put forward the problems of women workers in this country very effectively yesterday. As we know, 87% of the women workers are in agriculture sector and construction sector. Therefore, once these two Bills on agricultural workers and construction workers come, the problems of women workers both in agriculture and construction will be taken care of to some extent.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : About beedi workers.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : About the workers in the match box industry.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : They are also important. I will touch on child labour also. Beedi industry is an important industry. I am very happy to say that besides many things, we have been trying to emphasise on giving priority to the housing scheme for beedi workers.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : One second, Mr. Minister.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Yes.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN : I am sorry to disturb you. On the question of beedi workers, I would suggest one thing. We have the Kerala experience — I don't want you to copy it — in which 45,000 beedi workers are working as a co-operative society. They are getting all the benefits which the industrial workers are getting in this country. In India, in each State, there are about 7-8 lakh beedi workers. You are aware of this. Therefore, if you, from your end, take some initiative to encourage industrial co-operative societies in this country, it will give a big relief to this section of the poor workers.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : We are encouraging the co-operative societies because we found that such societies are working successfully in Kerala. We have a scheme under which we grant Rs. 75,000 for the construction of a working shed-cum-godown. We are giving this grant only to encourage our workers to form co-operative societies on their own. I think they need to be educated more.

In the case of housing, we have recently increased the subsidy component for the weaker sections of the society to build houses from Rs. 5,800 to Rs. 9,000. It is quite a substantial increase. We have increased the subsidy for those who want to build their own houses from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000. Earlier, the interest-free loan component was Rs. 6,000. We have now increased it to Rs. 10,000. I must say that this activity is doing very well, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and, to some extent, in Karnataka. Under this scheme, during the year 1991-92, we have constructed 31,000 housing units. In 1994-95, we provided funds for construction of 8,300 additional housing units. Therefore, by the end of this year, we will be having about 40,000 housing units for the beedi workers. This figure includes a small number of housing units meant for mining workers. I have visited those housing complexes in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. I think they are not bad. In this the State Governments should take more responsibility. We are planning to have a seminar comprising all the Labour Secretaries in Hyderabad. We want to show to all the Labour Secretaries how the Andhra Pradesh Government has been able to construct so many housing units for beedi workers. Let us hope that other State Governments will learn from this.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : What is the response of the Maharashtra Government ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : There is no response from the Maharashtra Government. That is why we are going to have a special seminar in Hyderabad in the next month. We are planning it. As far as scholarships and other things are concerned, we are trying to step up this. In 1992-93, we spent Rs. 93 lakhs on scholarships to the children of the beedi workers. In 1993-94, we have spent Rs. 2.40 crores which is a jump. Similarly we will be spending this year. I am informed that one daughter of a beedi worker whom we have helped stood 8th in the last Higher Secondary Examination of the State Board. There are a number of engineers and doctors already produced. I have asked the Department to make a survey as to how many engineers and how many doctors have come up as a result of the efforts that we have made.

SHRI JIBON ROY : What about ratification of the ILO Convention, the right to collective bargaining ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : About the ratification of the ILO Convention, we are not that bad as compared to many countries ... (*Interruptions*) You listen to me. You do not want to listen. If you are a labour leader, you must have the patience. Patience is very important. Otherwise, you would not get satisfaction yourself.

This year is the 75th year of the ILO. So, we are celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the ILO. One of the decisions

that we have taken is that as a part of the celebration of the 75th year of ILO, we will review the whole question of ratifying the ILO Convention. And as a part of this, we will review as many Conventions as possible. That is one of the decisions. And I will keep your suggestion in mind before we take a final decision.

श्री महेश्वर सिंह (हिमाचल प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, जैसे कि मंत्री महोदय ने स्वयं यह स्वीकार किया कि देश में विभिन्न प्रदेशों में लाखों की संख्या में बीड़ी मजदूर है । यह बात भी सर्वविदित है कि यह वर्ग ऐसा है जो सब से ज्यादा शोषित वर्ग है । कोई भी सुविधा प्राप्त करने के लिए बीड़ी मजदूरों की पहचान होना सब से पहली आवश्यकता है । इसके बारे में कई बार प्रश्न भी इस माननीय सदन में पूछे गये । मंत्री महोदय ने यह स्वीकार भी किया है कि अभी तक सभी बीड़ी मजदूरों को हम आइडेंटिटी कार्ड नहीं दे पाए है । अब यह आइडेंटिटी कार्ड देने का कार्य डिस्पेंसरियों में लगाए गये डाक्टरों को सौंपा गया है । डाक्टर की नियुक्ति डिस्पेंसरियों में स्वास्थ्य विभाग करता है और उनको पे श्रम मंत्रालय देता है । मैं याचिका समिति का सदस्य भी हूँ और प्रवास पर भी हम गये है । हमें यह देखने को मिला है कि कई जगहों पर डिस्पेंसरियों में डाक्टर ही नहीं है जिसके फलस्वरूप अभी तक उन मजदूरों को हम आइडेंटिटी कार्ड नही दे पाए है । मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूँगा कि क्या ऐसी कोई व्यवस्था करेंगे कि समयबद्ध कार्यक्रम के अनुसार इनको आइडेंटिटी कार्ड मिलें ?

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदया, बीड़ी बांधने के मजदूरों को जो तेंदू पत्ता या तम्बाकू दिया जाता है, वह भी पर्याप्त मात्रा में नहीं दिया जाता है । उसको देने का मापदंड भी विभिन्न प्रदेशों में भिन्न है जिसके फलस्वरुप सारा दिन बीड़ी बांधने के बाद मजदूरों को न्यूनतम मजदूरी भी नहीं मिल पाती है । क्या सरकार ऐसी व्यवस्था करेगी कि यह बीड़ी बांधने के लिए जो कच्चा माल दिया जाता है, इसके संबंध में भी कोई कानून बनाए ?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Before you answer his question, I would like to ask you how much time you are going to take because I have to adjourn the House for lunch, I have to take the sense of the House to extend the time of the House.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: We can sit a little late and finish this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): This is what I am saying. Ten to fifteen minutes?

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: Yes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Should I have the sense of the House to extend the time of the House by 15 minutes?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Okay. Now you continue.

SHRI P.A. SANGMA: The point raised by the hon. Member is very correct. Identification of beedi workers is a big problem. And because of the contract system, because of the middlemen, establishing a relationship between the employer and the employee becomes very difficult. Therefore, till today, we have been able to issue identity cards to 50 per cent of the beedi workers. But our effort is there. We have decentralised the power. We have given the power even to medical doctors to identify. The effort is on. And a lot of schemes are available for beedi workers, including the group insurance scheme where 12 lakhs have already been covered. So, we are trying our best to help the beedi workers. Coming to child labour,....

श्री महेश्वर सिंह : मैंने एक समस्या आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय के सामने रखी थी कि अब यह कार्य डाक्टरों को सौंपा गया है । अब डाक्टरों को नियुक्ति तो स्वास्थ्य विभाग करता है और वेतन दिया जाता है श्रम मंत्रालय से और डाक्टर वहां है नहीं । तो क्या डाक्टरों की नियुक्ति का कार्य श्रम मंत्रालय नहीं कर सकता है ताकि जल्दी से जल्दी वहां डाक्टर लगाये जाये..(व्यवधान) या कोई वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था करिये ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): He says the doctors are employed by the Health Department and they are paid by the Labour Department.

श्री महेश्वर सिंह : मैंने जो पूछा है उसका जवाब ही नहीं आया । यह बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है ।

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I will quickly finish because the time is very very short. I will come to child labour.

श्री सत्य प्रकाश मालवीय : चाइल्ड लेबर कालीन उद्योग में जो है उनके बारे में बताइये, जो कानपुर भादोही आदि में हैं ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): He is not replying.

SHRI P.A. SANGMA : I will give you all the information on beedi workers. You come to my office.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : You go to his office, have a cup of tea and have information also.

SHRI P.A. SANGMA : We have 17 million child labour in our country. It is a big issue, an international issue, including what happened in GATT, Uruguay Round and Marrakesh where social clause is involved. I think this is a matter which I cannot dwell upon in a few minutes because it is a very important issue. I only submit that out of 17 million, 36 per cent of the child labour is engaged in cultivation, 42 per cent is working as agricultural labour, and in allied agricultural activity like fisheries, plantation etc., we have another 8.25 per cent of child labour. Therefore, 87 per cent of child labour are in the unorganised sector. What is causing us concern is the children working in the manufacturing sector. That constitutes 6.08 per cent. This is what needs to be tackled and this is what we are trying to tackle. A lot of steps are being taken. The Central Advisory Board on Child Labour has decided that we should not tackle this problem at one time but should go step by step in a very scientific manner and involve the State Governments and NGOs We had a meeting with the NGOs. We had a meeting with the employers of the child labour and we are trying to solve this problem. Today we have got a number of projects to tackle this problem, like the IPECL and CLASP programmes of the ILO, and the Central Government itself is having a lot of projects. In the 8th Five-Year Plan, we have allocated Rs. 15 crores to tackle this problem. So, we are at it.

A question was raised about the bonded labour. We had a meeting on bonded labour....

श्री संघ प्रीय गौतम (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मंत्री जी, भट्ठा मजदूर जो इंट बनाने का काम करते है उनके साथ लाखों बच्चे काम करते है उनके बारे में क्या कर रहे है ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Yes, we have this carpet industry in Jammu and Kashmir. I visited those areas. We have a lot of projects. But it will take time before we are able to tackle it fully. You know our carpet industry is very important and it is a very important issue now in view of some threats from the developed countries on restrictions which they want to impose as non-tariff barriers. I think the other day the Commerce Minister has given a lot of clarifications on this matter. It is one area where the problem of child labour is relevant. Then you have this match and fire works factory at Sivakasi, glass and bangles industry in Ferozabad, gem-polishing industry in Jaipur. We have lost of projects in these areas and I think I will furnish information on what we are doing so far.

As far as the bonded labour is concerned, we have some problem. I do not talk about the State Governments and all that because the latest ruling of the hon. Supreme Court has expanded the definition of bonded labour in such a manner that we really do not know how to proceed about that. I am very frank about that. The Supreme Court has ruled that whoever is paid below the minimum wage is a bonded labour. The Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act contemplates that a person or a child is bonded if he is working because of bondage, because he is indebted to somebody. That is the criterion. The Supreme Court has gone beyond that scope. Madam, we have had a meeting with the Secretaries of Labour of the State Governments where we have decided to appoint a small Committee headed by the Additional Chief Secretary of Gujarat, with five other Secretaries, to go into the Supreme Court ruling and study the real definition of bonded labour. I hope the report would be available within a month. I hope so.

Madam, these are the points which have been raised. Once again, I express my thanks to all the hon. Members... *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) Mr. Narayanasamy.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA : Madam, just one point.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : I have indentified Mr. Narayanasamy. I will call you later.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Madam, hon. Members have raised the question about the working journalists. The hon. Minister heard us patiently yesterday. The point is, the hon. Minister gave an assurance that within one month, the Wage Board would be constituted for the journalists. This issue has been hanging fire for the last two years. I do not know whether he is under any pressure from the newspaper magnates.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Newspaper barons.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : I do not know whether he is under any pressure from the newspaper barons who are trying to block it. As you know, at the time of the Budget, the journalists went on strike and that created a problem. As Mr. Jibon Roy said, the Minister gives an assurance, but it is not implemented. This is one example of it. One month has gone by. Even now, the Minister is not replying. Therefore, I would like to know : When is the Wage Board going to be constituted ? This is one thing. Secondly,....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : You have put the question.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : It is in continuation of it. Another point is, at the time of constitution of the Wage Board, my feeling is that the important organisation of the journalists would be left out. I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that the biggest trade union would be given representation on the Wage Board.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (बिहार) : मैडम,, यह रूरल लेबर के बारे में मंत्री जी ने सब से कम कहा है जबकि स्वयं मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि 40 परसेंट से अधिक संख्या आज देश में रूरल लेबर की है, जो कि अनआर्गेनाइज्ड लेबर है । पब्लिक सैक्टर में जो हमारे मजदूर काम करते हैं वे तो आर्गेनाइज्ड है और किसी न किसी यूनियन के तहत हैं । लेकिन केरल और एक दो प्रांतों को अगर हम छोड़ दें तो पूरे देश में जो कृषि मजदूर हैं जिनकी संख्या सबसे अधिक है वे आर्गेनाइज्ड नहीं है और किसी यूनियन के अंतर्गत नहीं हैं । बहुत पहले दो बार मिनिमम वेजेज एक्ट के अंतर्गत उनके मिनिमम वेजेज निर्धारित किए गए जो विविध प्रकार के हैं । मिनिमम वेजेज किसी राज्य में कुछ है और किसी में कुछ है । पंजाब में अगर [मिनिमम वेजेज... **(व्यवधान)**

उपसभाध्यक्षा (श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज) : वह उन्होंने बताया है । उस पर खुलकर बताया है ।

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : नहीं-नहीं, मध्य प्रदेश और बिहार में... **(व्यवधान)**

उपसभाध्यक्षा (श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज) : उन्होंने रिजनल यूनिफार्मिटी की बात की... **(व्यवधान)** शंकर दयाल जी, देखिए हम सैकण्ड राउंड आफ् डिस्कशन नहीं शुरू कर रहे हैं । कोई बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण बात छूट गई हो तो बोलिए ।

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : ठीक है । मैंने कल और आज के अखबारों में देखा है कि सरकार एग्री-कल्चरल मिनिमम वेजेज के बारे में फिर से रिविजन करने जा रही है । एक बात इस संबंध में मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि कब तक यह काम होगा और सरकार इस संबंध में क्या कर रही है ?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Madam, the hon. Minister has said about the N.T.C. He said that no unit would be privatised and no unit would be closed. Now, can he give the same assurance in respect of the engineering industry and the fertilizer and chemical industry which are under the consideration of the tripartite machinery ?

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : महोदया, रामानुजम कमेटी की रिपोर्ट के बारे में पूछना चाहता हूं । बड़ी कंप्रीहेंसिव उसकी रेकमेंडेशंस हैं जिसमें बहुत से मुद्दे सर्वसम्मत हैं सब ट्रेड यूनियंस के, आपने उनका उल्लेख नहीं किया । उस पर आप निर्णय या कार्यवाही कब करेंगे ?

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Madam, I appreciate the concern he has expressed on unemployment, but will the Minister consider recommending to the Central Government that the ban on recruitment which is still persisting in many of the Central Government departments, railways and public sector undertakings should be withdrawan? That is No. 1. No. 2: There is a serious complaint regarding the working of Employment Exchanges. According to the statistics given by the Employment Exchanges, the volume of unemployment has come down. Therefore, what steps would you like to take to improve the functioning of the Employment Exchanges in the country?

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: The point is, we wanted an assurance from the Minister that before bringing any legislation on labour, he would have consultations with the trade unions. I hope he will consider that.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Mr. Minister, you quickly answer the questions so that I can adjourn the House for lunch.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Madam, as far as the question of revision of wages of the agricultural labour is concerned, in the sphere of agriculture the Central Government is confined only to those areas which are owned by the Central Agricultural Universities and the labour are working on their farms. Otherwise, for the rest it is the State Governments. As far as the Central sphere is concerned, we have decided to increase the minimum wages. It has been notified for opinion—we are soliciting opinion—and, after that, we will follow the procedure. So, there is a proposal as far as that point is concerned. The second point is ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: He always forgets me and he forgets my points.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: I beg to differ from the hon. Member.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): He never forgets you!

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: His contention is that Government has promised to constitute a Wage Board in one month. It was not so. What the Government has said on the floor of the Lok Sabha was that Government would take a final decision on the constitution of a Wage Board in one month. But we did it in one week—three weeks earlier than what we had promised. Now, as far as its constitution is concerned, we have to follow certain procedures. We have written immediately to the unions of the working journalists and the employers to give names to be represented on the Wage Board. We have a little problem about representation of members from the working journalists because, the Act provides, specifically, only for two representatives, whereas they have three important unions and all three wanted representation. We have to sort out that problem. And we are still waiting for the names from the employers' side. As soon as we get their names, we will proceed...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Employers will never give. You know them. *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Let him finish. You can't go on continuously.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The point is, when the Wage Board will be constituted, and Minister talks about procedures. It may take one year, it may take five years.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): He hasn't said that.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: The Minister says that as far as employers' representation is concerned, they have not sent the names...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Whenever I face a serious problem, I will request Mr. Narayanasamy to come to my rescue, and I am sure he will sort out all the problems! ... *(Interruptions)* ...

To the question from Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee, the answer is "No".

About the Ramanujam Committee, Mr. Mathur has dwelt elaborately on new labour legislations, and I am sorry I did

not touch the point. I think I will combine this point with Mr. Balanandan's point because it is the same thing. We have actually taken a number of meetings on this issue with the trade unions. The entire proposed legislation is based on the Ramanujam Committee's recommendations. The Ramanujam Committee is a bipartite committee. It has two parts. One is amendment to the Trade Unions Act and the other is amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act. As far as the amendment to the Trade Unions Act is concerned, the Government has taken a final decision. I have given notice to the Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha for introduction of the amendment as far as the Trade Unions Act is concerned. As far as the Industrial Disputes Act is concerned, we are yet to discuss that with some more people. Let us see what happens about that.

As far as the Trade Union Act is concerned, I do agree with the suggestion of Mr. Mathur that in future we must encourage a bipartite mechanism as against the present tripartite mechanism. I am with you. A new law, if and when it comes, will be...

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR : Say "when". Don't say "if".

SHRI P.A. SANGMA : Okay, when. I withdraw the word "if".

As far as employment generation is concerned, Mr. Das Gupta asked for removal of the ban in recruitment.

Unemployment problem is the biggest problem of the country. There has to be a national policy on that. The National Development Council had appointed a sub-committee to go into it. I was a member of that committee. We discussed this problem. A report of the sub-committee was submitted to the National Development Council, and they have accepted our report. It contains the problems and the strategies for future. I don't want to go into the details.

The Central Government, including the public sector, is not a very big employer. Out of 319 million workers in our country, the share of the State Governments the Central Government the Central public sector undertakings, the State public sector undertakings and the corporations all combined, is just 19 million, while 300 million are employed by others.

So, removal of the ban on recruitment is not going to solve the unemployment problem. The problem has to be looked at in totality.

I do agree with the hon. Member that the role of employment exchange has to be redefined. I am personally reviewing this matter. I had discussions with the Member of the Planning Commission in charge of employment, and I am convinced that the role being played by the employment exchange now is not adequate and is not very relevant to the present situation. Therefore, their role has to be redefined. I am at it.

Thank you, Madam Vice-Chairman.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज) : अब सदन की कार्यवाही 2 बजकर 47 मिनट तक स्थगित की जाती है ।

The House then adjourned for lunch at forty-seven minutes past one of the clock.

The House reasesmbled after lunch at forty-eight minutes past two of the clock, The Vice-Chairman (SHRI MD. SALIM) in the Chair.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM) : Now, we will take up Special Mentions.

Developed Countries, Plea for Paying Lesser Compensation to the Soldiers of the Third World Countries Serving in U.N. Peace-Keeping Forces

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to draw attention of this House to a very important matter which has been widely reported in the press. It has been reported that some of the developed countries have made a demand to the U.N. authorities that soldiers serving in the U.N. peace-keeping forces should be meted out a